

15. AN UNUSUAL NESTING SITE OF *NECTARINIA ASIATICA*

The nest of the purple sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* is usually suspended on a twig and placed a metre or two from the ground, hanging under a bough or bush. Some unusual nest sites are also mentioned in the available literature.

On April 14, 1996, a nest of *Nectarinia asiatica* was noticed in Hanuman Nagar, Jaipur, suspended from an electric pole. It was about 8 m above the ground and fully exposed. Interestingly, in the vicinity of the nest there were many potential nesting sites. I am not sure why the elec-

tric pole was selected for nesting. The nest was complete when I discovered it and the pair was busy feeding the chicks. The pair was successful in raising the two chicks. A photograph was taken, but it is not of reproducible quality.

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## 16. REPTILES OF KEOLADEO NATIONAL PARK, BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN

The present paper is based on an inventory made in Keoladeo National Park (KNP), Bharatpur during 1986-90. The KNP (27° 7.6' to 27° 2.20' N and 77° 29.5' to 77° 33.9' E) lies in the Indo-Gangetic flood plains. Total area of this National Park is 29 sq. km, of which 8.5 sq. km is a seasonal wetland. The present report is significant as eastern Rajasthan was not adequately surveyed for reptiles in the past (Biswas and Sanyal 1977). Altogether, 29 species of reptiles, which represent 11 families and 24 genera (Table 1) were recorded during the present study.

Seven species of freshwater turtles consisting of four hardshells and three softshells were recorded from KNP (Table 1). The record of the Indian peacock softshell turtle is a range extension (Bhupathy and Ajithkumar 1988). Information on the ecology of Indian flapshell turtle in this National Park is available (Bhupathy and Vijayan 1993, 1994). Eight species of lizards including three species of geckos, two agamids, two skinks and one species of monitor lizard were recorded. Among them the Indian garden lizard and Bengal monitor lizard were common. Fan-throated lizard, a common species found elsewhere in Rajasthan was observed only twice outside KNP, and it may be found inside this National Park. Fourteen species of snakes were

recorded, of which the Indian saw-scaled viper was observed once outside KNP. Indian rock python was the most common snake in the terrestrial, and checkered keelback water snake in the aquatic area. It was estimated that about 150 pythons inhabit KNP; information on some aspects of its general ecology is available elsewhere (Bhupathy and Vijayan 1989).

The number of reptile species found in KNP is high considering its size. This could be due to its strategic placement bordering dry semi-arid, and wet Gangetic flood plains. All seven species of turtles, recorded from the KNP are found in the Ganges system. It is to be noted that during the monsoon, KNP receives water from the River Gambhir, a tributary of River Yamuna. Species such as the Pakistan ribbon snake, Indian saw-scaled viper and fan-throated lizard are typical of arid regions. Absence of the Indian star tortoise *Geochelone elegans* in KNP may be due to wet conditions and inundation during the monsoon. High densities of the Indian rock python in KNP could be mainly due to the protection rendered by the Rajasthan Forest Department and abundant food.

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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

TABLE I  
REPTILES RECORDED IN KEOLADEO NATIONAL  
PARK DURING 1986-90.

Scientific name	Common name	Status
Family: Bataguridae (Hardshell turtles, pond turtles)		
1. <i>Geoclemys hamiltonii</i>	Spotted pond turtle	Uncommon
2. <i>Hardella thurjii</i>	Crowned river turtle	Common
3. <i>Kachuga tecta</i>	Indian roofed turtle	Uncommon
4. <i>K. tentoria</i>	Indian tent turtle	Rare
Family: Trionychidae (Softshell turtles)		
5. <i>Aspideretes gangeticus</i>	Indian softshell turtle	Common
6. <i>A. hurum</i>	Indian peacock softshell turtle	Uncommon
7. <i>Lissemys punctata</i>	Indian flapshell turtle	Common
Family: Gekkonidae (Geckos)		
8. <i>Hemidactylus brookii</i>	Brook's house gecko	Uncommon
9. <i>H. flaviviridis</i>	Yellow-green house gecko	Common
10. <i>H. triedrus</i>	Termite hill gecko	Rare?
Family: Agamidae (Garden lizards)		
11. <i>Calotes versicolor</i>	Indian garden lizard	Common
12. <i>Sitana ponticeriana</i>	Fan-throated lizard	Rare
Family: Scincidae (Skinks)		
13. <i>Lygosoma punctata</i>	Spotted supple skink	Uncommon
14. <i>Mabuya dissimilis</i>	Striped grass skink	Rare

TABLE I (contd.)  
REPTILES RECORDED IN KEOLADEO NATIONAL  
PARK DURING 1986-90.

Scientific name	Common name	Status
Family: Varanidae (Monitor lizards)		
15. <i>Varanus bengalensis</i>	Bengal monitor	Common
Family: Typhlopidae (Worm snake)		
16. <i>Ramphotyphlops braminus</i>	Common worm snake	Uncommon
Family: Boidae (Earth snakes)		
17. <i>Eryx conicus</i>	Common sand boa	Rare
18. <i>E. johnii</i>	Red sand boa	Rare
19. <i>Python molurus</i>	Indian rock python	Common
Family: Colubridae		
20. <i>Boiga trigonatus</i>	Common Indian cat snake	Uncommon
21. <i>Lycodon aulicus</i>	Common wolf snake	Uncommon
22. <i>Oligodon armensis</i>	Banded kukri snake	Rare
23. <i>Psanmophis leithii</i>	Pakistan ribbon snake	Rare
24. <i>Ptyas mucosus</i>	Western rat snake	Common
25. <i>Xenochrophis piscator</i>	Checkered keelback water snake	Common
Family: Elapidae		
26. <i>Bungarus caeruleus</i>	Common Indian krait	Rare?
27. <i>Naja naja</i>	Spectacled cobra	Common
Family: Viperidae (Vipers)		
28. <i>Daboia russelii</i>	Russell's viper	Rare
29. <i>Echis carinatus</i>	Indian saw-scaled viper	Rare

Sightings >25, 10≤25, and <10 were considered as common, uncommon and rare respectively; nomenclature follows Das (1997).

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## 17. A LARGE BROOD OF THE GREEN PIT VIPER (*TRIMERESURUS GRAMINEUS*)

A green pit viper (*Trimeresurus gramineus*) was caught on May 7, 1997, close to Nere village, Panvel, Navi Mumbai, at 2330 hrs. The snake was brought to the Indian Herpetological Society, Raigad branch. Upon closer observation and palpation, it was found to be gravid. It measured 105 cm (TBL) and was parrot green dorsally and yellow ventrally. The maximum recorded length for this species is 111.7 cm (Daniel 1983).

The snake was kept in a wooden cage measuring 0.9 m x 0.6 m x 0.6 m, with two netting windows for ventilation and glass on one side for observation. A potted plant kept in the cage was instantly accepted by the female. On approaching the cage, the female adopted a defensive posture and threw the forebody into a large 'S', resting the mid-body on the plant. Unusually rapid movements of the tail tip were observed, similar to snakes of *Boiga* species.

The following day the snake was presented with a house gecko (*Hemidactylus* sp.), which was not consumed. When the cage was checked on May 10, at about 0200 hrs, no neonates were seen. But at 0900 hrs on the same day, 20 neonates were observed in the cage. Since the literature (Daniel 1983, Mattison 1995, Khaire 1996) does not mention time taken for birth it would be relevant to state that all 20 young were born within 6-7 hours.

Post-birth membrane was present on 15 neonates. Of these 11 were bottle green dorsally, while nine were parrot green, with a yellow

tinge. All had a prominent black streak on either side of the head, extending from the eye to the neck. Distinct, irregular, dark cross-bars were also visible on the dorsum of all neonates. The size ranged from 11-13 cm (TBL). All the young were healthy and active. The female was motionless, and rested for about three hours on the plant.

The house gecko introduced on May 8, 1999 was still alive in the cage. On May 10, three additional juvenile house geckos, two juvenile frogs (*Rana* sp.) and three juvenile toads (*Bufo* sp.) were introduced in the cage. All neonates sloughed three days after birth. One fed on a juvenile house gecko after moulting. No feeding was observed in the cage for the next three days. There is little information about the young of this species having fed in captivity (Barooa 1951, Kinnear 1912). On May 16, all neonates and the female were released in a forested tract near Panvel.

From the literature surveyed, the largest previously recorded brood consisted of 15 young (Kinnear 1912). This observation appears to be the largest brood size for the species.

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